



When God is on Sabbatical

Adapted from "The Basics" series by Bob Brock.

When a crisis hits your life as a believer, it is easy to wonder where God is. Perhaps you have asked that question at least once in your life. Read the following story from my uncle Bob:

The doctor looked at me and said, "Your daughter is going to die, and there is nothing that can be done to save her." This was surreal. She had done nothing to deserve this. She was victimized by what I will call emotional terrorism. We were left alone to watch her die. I could not work or minister because I had to be by her side 24/7. Hours, days, and weeks dragged by as the Grim Reaper slowly, but surely, moved in to grab his prey. Where was God? Was He on a sabbatical? Had He gone on a vacation with no forwarding address?

Then another Sunday rolled around, and we could not take her to church; but I insisted that we would have church in my bedroom. The two kids were sitting on the floor, and I was in my bedroom chair. It was so simple. I read a passage of Scripture, and we began to sing, "He is Lord. He is Lord. He has risen from the dead, and He is Lord. Every knee shall bow. Every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." I prayed a little prayer. My incredible son prayed, and then my precious daughter lifted her boney arms protruding out from the sleeves of her pink pajamas and began to pray softly. Tears began to trickle down her cheeks and her little chin began to tremble. Words of a heavenly language began to flow from her lips, and the service was over. But God joined us somewhere during this little service with His almightiness, all His glory, and healing power. My little dying daughter was healed instantly and spared to become a very successful pastor's wife. He was there all the time, but in our pain, we just didn't know it.¹

¹ Story told to author February 2017.

COURAGE

C1: Describe a time in your life when you felt as if God was nowhere to be found?

C2: Have you ever been through a life situation and felt as if God did not care? What were your feelings during this time? What things did you do to help you make it through this situation?

C3: Read the following verses and answer the questions.

John 11:4 -6 (NLT) But when Jesus heard about it he said, "Lazarus's sickness will not end in death. No, it happened for the glory of God so that the Son of God will receive glory from this." So, although Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, he stayed where he was for the next two days.

- How would you explain this story?
- Has there ever been a time when you felt as if the word **compassionate** was not a descriptor of God?
- Describe your situation.
- Describe your feelings and thoughts during this time.

STRENGTH

S1: Read the following verse and answer the question.

John 11:4 (NLT)

- What lessons does this verse say to you about the presence of Jesus during your situation?

S2: Read the following verses and answer the question.

John 11:35, 43-44 (NLT)

- What lessons do these verses say to you about the presence of Jesus in your situation?

S3: Read the following verse and answer the questions.

Hebrews 2:18 (NLT)

- What does this verse speak to you regarding God's ability to understand your situation?

- So, what should your response be when you do not sense or feel God in your situation?

ENDURANCE

E1: There is an old chorus “Shut in with God.” Look how Jesus describes shut in times in **Matthew 6:6 (NLT)**.

- What does this verse mean to you in the place where you are living right now?

E2: Read the following verses and answer the questions.

Genesis 3:3 (NLT)

2 Thessalonians 2:2 (NLT)

James 4:8 (NLT)

- What do these verses suggest to you the tricks of the enemy may be?
- What do these verses tell you about what happens when you draw close to God?
- Write down the questions the enemy uses to attack your mind.

E3: Read the following verses and answer the questions.

1 Kings 8:56 (NLT)

Isaiah 55:7 (NLT)

Ephesians 1:22 (NLT)

Ephesians 3:20 (NLT)

Philippians 4:19 (NLT)

2 Peter 3:9 (NLT)

- Each day, take one verse and write a one sentence interpretation from the verse that will keep you and your mind from being shaken when feeling alone.

- Each night, share the verse and your interpretation of the verse with your spouse and/or trusted friend and commit to memorize and pray one of the verses each week for six weeks.